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Viewing cable 05LIMA1246, OPIUM STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 05LIMA1246 | 2005-03-14 21:05 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Lima |

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LIMA 001246

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INL/LP, WHA/AND
DEPT FOR ONDCP FOR D. GETTINGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2015
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: OPIUM STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

REF: A. A...

id: 28747
date: 3/14/2005 21:05
refid: 05LIMA1246
origin: Embassy Lima
classification: CONFIDENTIAL
destination: 05LIMA4
header:

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LIMA 001246

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INL/LP, WHA/AND
DEPT FOR ONDCP FOR D. GETTINGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/14/2015
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: OPIUM STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

REF: A. A. LIMA 0004

[1](#)B. B. LIMA 579
[1](#)C. C. QUITO 149

Classified By: Classified by J. Curtis Struble, Ambassador, Reason 1.4
A

(C) BEGIN SUMMARY: In the first two months of 2005, the

Mission concentrated its resources and efforts to implement its opium strategy set forth in REF A. Working with the Peruvian police, the effort has resulted in eradication of 53 hectares of poppy fields and a reinvigorated intelligence collection program. Trips to Quito (REF C) and the Amazonas region (REF B) have spurred greater attention to collecting information on the emerging opium poppy industry in Peru and trafficking routes. The Peruvian police are actively recruiting Peruvian government employees who live in or travel to opium growing to provide information on poppy cultivation and trafficking. Plans are to reassess the Mission strategy in June and adjust our efforts accordingly.

END SUMMARY

1. (C) The Mission strategy to combat opium production and trafficking in Peru was laid out in REF A in January. Since then, Embassy agencies including the Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Military Assistance Group (MAAG) have been aggressively pursuing their elements of the strategy including eradication, interdiction, intelligence collection and regional cooperation.

INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING

2. (C) Collecting human intelligence is key to an effective eradication campaign. The GOP acknowledges it has very few informants, and information that comes in does not have exact coordinates, so that there is a high degree of uncertainty. As an initial step, NAS has supported the formation of a PNP opium eradication task force. Members include DIRANDRO Office of Intelligence (OINT), DIRANDRO operations, regional police offices (DIVANDRO) and anti-drug prosecutors in opium growing zones to develop and exploit human intelligence on poppy. The OINT has planned a series of meetings with representatives of the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture in the regions of Cajamarca, Amazonas and San Martin to recruit their employees who travel or live in opium growing areas to provide information. The OINT will also meet with regional and local political and law enforcement authorities to gain their cooperation. DIRANDRO has also tasked PNP regional offices (DIVANDRO's) in suspect opium producing areas to concentrate their efforts in providing timely information on opium plantations. DIRANDRO intelligence and operational officers will be assigned to selected DIVANDRO's to energize and supervise the production efforts. All intelligence about opium acquired by DIRANDRO and DIVANDRO units is channeled through OINT for verification and mapping.

INTERDICTION, REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ERADICATION

3. (C) Interdicting opium latex is a key part of our Mission strategy. DEA has deployed its investigators to northern Peru as part of its Northern Border Initiative. These agents are in regular contact with PNP counterparts responsible for the Loreto Department to coordinate investigative activities.

DEA plans to establish an undercover presence to identify individuals and organizations involved in latex trafficking.

Progress was made to start-up a drug hotline program. The Mission Military Information Support Team (MIST) is providing publicity support for a rewards program tied to the hotline. They have developed a radio spot and posters that will be distributed in towns close to poppy growing zones and trafficking routes.

4. (SBU) Based on information from an informant, the PNP, with DEA support, seized 76.8 kilos of opium latex from Peruvian traffickers in city of Pucallpa on January 24. The traffickers were not associated with any identifiable drug trafficking organization. They did not have established buyers. Samples were sent to DEA headquarters to test their purity and to compare them to samples of latex from other producer countries. Current information suggests that all latex sold in Peru is destined for other countries where it will be processed into heroin although there is some evidence that morphine is being produced in Peru. Demand for heroin in Peru is not evident.

5. (SBU) Regional cooperation on opium trafficking was addressed when Lima Country Team members met with their counterparts in Quito on January 18-19 to discuss areas of cooperation and coordination (REF C). The meeting served to heighten awareness of nascent threat of opium latex trafficking in Peru and Southern Ecuador. Both Embassies are mobilizing to gather more intelligence on this issue and to coordinate our efforts. DEA and their police counterparts in both countries are organizing an officer-exchange program in Guayaquil and Piura. DEA hosted a regional police meeting in Iquitos from Feb. 21- 24 attended by representatives from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Venezuela and the U.S. The main themes were international terrorism and

illicit trafficking. Although coca dominated the drug trafficking discussions, the expansion of poppy plantations in presentations by Colombia, Peru and Ecuador provided convincing evidence of an increase in latex trafficking and the nexus between subversive movements (FARC and Sendero Luminoso) and illicit trafficking. Conference attendees signed a multilateral agreement to develop and implement an effective regional law enforcement collaborative program, with support from DEA.

16. (SBU) An Embassy group led by the DCM traveled in late January to the capital of Amazonas region to discuss opium trafficking with regional authorities (REF C). The authorities acknowledged ongoing cultivation and trafficking but noted they have few resources to combat it. NAS police advisor will travel to Cajamarca this month with his PNP counterpart to meet with local PNP officials to discuss their participation in opium poppy operations.

17. (SBU) On the eradication front, the PNP found and destroyed a total of 53 hectares of opium poppy from January 1 to March 11. These efforts include 10 hectares of opium in Yarowilca, Huanuco on January 28, 18 hectares in Cayern, Huanuco on March 1, and 25 hectares of opium poppy near Jaen, in Cajamarca on March 11. The PNP is increasing the size of the NAS-funded Special Operations Group (GOES), the troops used to eradicate poppy, from the present twenty-five members to a total of sixty officers, tripling its operational capacity and enabling the unit to operate in different production areas simultaneously. NAS will continue to provide logistic support to the PNP to eradicate poppy whenever it is found.

18. (SBU) Peruvian law requires the presence of an anti-drug prosecutor from the GOP Public Ministry for all drug operations carried out by the PNP. The shortage of qualified prosecutors presents a potential bottleneck to mounting an increased number of counternarcotics operations in opium growing areas. To overcome this shortfall, NAS is sponsoring a drug prosecutor's training program to prepare local and regional prosecutors in the northern areas of Peru to participate in anti-opium operations.

SUPPORT NEEDS

19. (SBU) We are counting on INL to provide aircraft better suited for this type of mission than the Cessna C208. Reconnaissance methods that require pilots to "eyeball" opium poppy fields are risky to the pilots and unreliable in locating fields. Besides poor flying conditions in the mountains, pilots must fly at and above 13,000 feet because of high terrain and winds, while trying to identify poppy fields on mountainous slopes. Timing of the deployment of INL aircraft is critical to success. The window of opportunity to catch opium when it is in flower is in March-April and September-October. Post has requested INL/A to send 2 reconnaissance aircraft to Peru in early April but this is not yet confirmed (REF D).

10. (SBU) CONCLUSION: The basis of our efforts has to be better intelligence collection through the police, and this is where we will focus our efforts. The Mission will continue to actively implement our opium strategy in the coming months even as we enter full swing into coca eradication and interdiction operations. We plan to reassess our strategy in June, when we will refine our estimates of operational requirements and identify what additional resources might be needed.
STRUBLE

=====CABLE ENDS=====